

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. In the Office Action of April 22, 2005, claims 1-7 and 10-15 were rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) by U.S. Patent No. 6,332,880 (Yang). Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). In particular, claim 8 is rejected as being unpatentable over Yang in view of Patent No. 5,971,983 (Lesh) and claim 9 was rejected as being unpatentable over Yang in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,237,605 (Vaska).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and objections are requested for the reasons stated below.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1-7 and 10-15 have been rejected as being anticipated by Yang. Claim 1, as presently presented, recites a pre shaped guiding introducer that is slidable within the sheath. Yang fails to disclose a pre-shaped guiding introducer that is employed to guide a catheter towards the pulmonary vein. Instead, Yang disclose that a pre-shaped wire is attached to the distal end of a catheter.

In order to maintain the pre-shaped wire in a straight or unbent condition, a rigid sheath (74) is provided. "The sheath (74)

retains the distal catheter end (16) in a straightened configuration against the normal bias of the wire (72). The sheath may include spirally or helically wound fibers to provide enhanced torsional stiffness to the sheath (74)." Yang, Col. 12, Lines 6-13. A second, flexible sheath (26) bends with the pre-shaped wire, forming elbow (70) when the rigid sheath (74) is withdrawn.

Neither sheath (26) or sheath (74) are pre-shaped to direct the catheter towards a pulmonary vein, or any other target. Therefore, it is clear that Yang fails to anticipate claims 1-8 and 10-15 of the present application.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claim 8 is rejected as being unpatentable over Yang in view of Lesh and claim 9 is rejected as being unpatentable over Yang in view of Vaska. Claims 8 and 9 are dependent upon claim 1. As stated above, Yang fails to disclose a pre-shaped guiding introducer that directs a catheter, slidable therein, towards a pulmonary vein. Thus, even if Yang were combined with Lesh or Vaska, it would not result in the present invention as recited in claims 8 and 9.

CONCLUSION

Every effort has been made to particularly and distinctly define the subject matter of the invention. The claims are definite, and are patentable over the prior art of record. For all the foregoing reasons, the differences between the invention and the prior art of record are such that the subject matter claimed as a whole is patentable over the prior art cited by the Examiner. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: August 22, 2005
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